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A Bimonthly Newsletter for Economic Research Service Employees and Colleagues

CHOICES Hits the Newstands

ERS's Schertz is Editor

The first issue of *CHOICES*, the new policy-oriented magazine of the American Association of Agricultural Economists (AAEA), came off press the end of January. Many ERS staff contributed directly and indirectly to its realization; its editor is ERS economist Lyle Schertz, whose enthusiasm and dedication are largely responsible for transforming an idea into a reality.

The first issue includes articles by former Secretary of Agriculture Clifford Hardin, former Minnesota professor and President Kennedy adviser Willard Cochrane, M.I.T. Professor Lester Thurow, ERS economists

Bernal Green and Tom Carlin, Resources for the Future economist Pierre Crosson, and an interview with the Secretary of Agriculture-Designate Richard Lyng. There are shorter pieces by Don Paarlberg, Lynn Daft, Senators Helms, Pryor, and Boren, Robert Spitze, Harold Breimyer, William Hansel, Evan

Drummond, as well as ERS information resources manager Robert Rovinsky and former ERS economist Paul Prentice.

CHOICES is for those who make and implement policies at the national, State, and county levels, those directly affected by policies (such as farmers and agribusinesses), those indirectly affected (such as mayors of rural towns and bankers and lawyers in rural America), and others who relate in special ways to rural America (such as animal, crop, and soil scientists).

AAEA members receive the quarterly magazine free. Nonmembers can subscribe at

an introductory offer of \$19.95 per year. Subscriptions should be sent to *CHOICES*, c/o Dunnington Communication, 1250 Eye Street, NW, Suite 300, Washington, DC 20005. Authors should send manuscripts to Lyle Schertz, 12708 Oak Farms Road, Herndon, VA 22071.

Modeling Agricultural Trade Revisited

IATRC Meets in Vancouver

"Modeling Agricultural Trade" was the theme of the International Agricultural Trade Research Consortium (IATRC) meeting in Vancouver, December 16-18. Four ERS economists took part in the first day's presentation of five modeling activities. Vernon Roningen and Karen Liu discussed ERS's GOL (grains-oilseeds-livestock) model; Jerry Sharples and Praveen Dixit discussed ERS's microcomputer-based models. The Michigan State University model, the Iowa State University model, and the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA) model were also discussed. Each model's user reported results of two model shocks: a 5-percent reduction in production (in 1 year) and complete trade liberalization.

Agenda items for the second and third day included "Future Directions for Agricultural Trade Modeling" and "Trade Research Reporting." ERS research activities were reported on by Administrator John Lee (overview), Cathy Jabara and Nicole Ballinger (trade liberalization), and Jerry Sharples (competitiveness).

Inside . . .

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Editor Schertz



ERS Administrator John Lee [standing far left] presents the situation and outlook award to Richard Nehring, Nancy Kenney, Leslie Ross, Jan Lipson, Nydia Suarez [seated left to right] Amjad Gill, Steve Haykin [partially obscured], Mark Smith, Mary Burfisher, Stacy Rosen [partially obscured], Nancy McKaig, Fannye Lockley, Christine Bolling, Albert

Evans, Ray Nightingale (project leader), Lawrence Witucki, Peter Riley, Ricardo Krajewski, John Link, Margaret Missiaen, Gerald Rector, David Stallings, Donald Sillers, Arthur Morey, and John Parker [standing left to right]. [Not pictured: Richard Brown, James Cole, William Hall, Maurice Landes, David Skully, and Wanda Wade.] (Photo by Jay Beavers)



Keith Collins



Ron Durst

ERS Excellence Awards for 1985

Four Awards Are Made

The ERS Excellence Awards recognize outstanding work in a publication or some other final piece of analytical writing. The awards carry a \$3,500 cash payment for an individual award or \$5,000 for a group award and are given in three categories: research, situation and outlook, and staff work. A winner of an Excellence Award also receives the Administrator's Special Merit Award. The 1985 Research Award (one group award) went to James Johnson, Kenneth Baum, Richard Prescott, and David Harrington for their work on farm financial conditions. The 1985 Situation and Outlook Award (one group award) went to the 31 people who produced *World Food Aid Needs and Availabilities, 1985*. The 1985 Staff Work Awards (two individual awards) went to Keith Collins for his work on the farm bill and to Ron Durst for his work on tax policy.



John Lee [center] presents the research award to James Johnson, Kenneth Baum, David Harrington, and Richard Prescott. (Photo by Jay Beavers)

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Administrator's Letter—Gramm-Rudman and ERS

Amid concern about budget reductions for Federal agencies and reduced resources for agricultural research in some States, ERS is fortunate to have strong support and relatively good prospects. There are uncertainties, of course, and we are constantly challenged to meet a growing demand for economic information by better using limited resources. But ERS has been spared debilitating cuts. The same is true for the total set of programs under the Assistant Secretary for Economics, reflecting the priority given by the Department and OMB to maintaining economic data and analysis.

For fiscal year 1985 (October 1984-September 1985), ERS received appropriations of \$46.6 million and a staffing ceiling of 921. We began fiscal year 1986 (in October 1985) with a continuing resolution authorization of \$46.4 million (which was reduced to \$46.1 million in the second continuing resolution that was passed in December 1985) and a staffing ceiling of 902. Our proportionate share of the fiscal year 1986 Gramm-Rudman (G-R) cuts is \$2.0 million, thus reducing our estimated funding this fiscal year to \$44.1 million.

How will the \$2.0-million budget reduction be absorbed? First, we decided to protect salary funds for all current staff and the funds already committed to data collection. Those costs account for over 80 percent of our budget. The remainder of the budget is for travel, utilities, staff relocation, contracts, cooperative research agreements, training, equipment, ADP, printing, reproduction, supplies, other miscellaneous items, and money to fill vacancies.

Since we are beginning the sixth month of fiscal year 1986, a considerable portion of those funds has already been spent or contractually obligated. Thus, the \$2.0-million G-R reduction represents a significant portion of the discretionary flexibility remaining in our budget for this year. We ultimately determined that each major organizational unit funded by ERS could absorb its *pro rata* share of the G-R reduction by sharply curtailing travel, training, new cooperative research agreements, and equipment purchases and by filling only the most critical vacancies.

The units receiving *pro rata* cutbacks include the Office of the Administrator, the four program divisions (Agriculture and Rural Economics, International Economics, National Economics, and Natural Resource Economics), and ERS's Data Services Center. Also, USDA's Office of Energy, Economics Management Staff, and Economic Analysis Staff (staff offices in the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Economics) are partially funded by ERS and will receive a 4.3-percent cut in the funds they receive through the ERS appropriation.

The curtailments in travel, training, and equipment create temporary inconveniences, but enough funds remain for the most essential work. Cutbacks in cooperative research agreements and new hires will, of course, reduce program output this fiscal year and next. For the longer term, we will have to adjust our overall program to restore adequate support to the staff on board. **The bottom line:** We will survive this fiscal year's G-R reductions without serious damage to the ERS program.

For fiscal year 1987, the Administration has proposed a \$45.5-million budget for ERS (a \$1.4-million increase from this year's post-G-R level) and a staffing ceiling of 872 (30 positions below the current ceiling). That budget reflects strong support for what ERS does. Congress will be closely scrutinizing our funding proposal. Our eventual funding for the next fiscal year will depend on the success of Congress and the Administration in reducing the overall deficit and in agreeing on priorities without having to resort to across-the-board reductions that would be triggered by G-R or by a Congressional resolution (if the U.S. Supreme Court upholds a District Court's finding that part of the G-R trigger mechanism is unconstitutional).

Thus, ERS goes into the fiscal year 1987 budget process in a relatively strong position. We have important work to do and the necessary support to get it done.

John Cee

Current Research

Textile Trade Bills Assessed

Reagan Vetoes Final Version

The "Textile and Apparel Trade Enforcement Act of 1985" that was vetoed by President Reagan in December was a Congressional response to textile producers' demands for protection from increased imports. ERS researcher Terry Townsend (786-3313) and former ERS economist Ann Tutwiler analyzed how the Senate and House versions of the act would have affected cotton and synthetic fiber textile imports.

Under the Senate version, total imports could have increased approximately 32 percent from 1985 to 1990—an annual growth of about 6 percent, slightly slower than the 7.4-percent rate that prevailed from 1966 to 1984 but sharply below the 19-percent annual rate of the past 5 years.

If the House version of the bill had become law, U.S. imports would have fallen 25 percent in 1985; imports in 1990 would have been 5 percent below imports in 1984.

Both versions would probably have affected textile imports less during the first year than was anticipated by both supporters and detractors because of minimum quotas and the exclusion of the European Community and Canada. Both versions would have tended to shift textile investment and production away from the current major producing countries.

Vegetable Oil Price Relationships Examined

Can Vegetable Oils Substitute For Each Other?

Regardless of the time interval, soybean and cottonseed oils appear to substitute readily for each other; both have similar end-use patterns. Coconut and palm oil prices were highly related to soybean and cottonseed oils only over the longer term interval of 3 years or more. Those are some of the findings of Ed Fryar (University of Arkansas) and ERS researcher Roger Hoskin (786-1840) who examined the relationships among prices of

five vegetable oils and their shortrun and longrun substitutability in end uses.

The findings suggest that coconut and palm oils are not readily substituted for soybean and cottonseed oils during the shorter term intervals analyzed. Regardless of the length of time involved, the relationship between the corn oil price and the price of any other oil was much weaker, probably because corn oil demand is not sensitive to price changes in the vegetable oil complex.

Nordic Market for U.S. Food Estimated

Outlook is Promising

Changes in food distribution channels, household size, consumer preferences, and lifestyles have enhanced the Nordic demand for highly processed convenience foods and for fresh produce from the United States, despite import barriers and competition from other suppliers. Those are the findings of ERS economist Harold McNitt (786-1717) who has been examining the Swedish, Norwegian, and Finnish markets for U.S. food.

Food distribution in the Nordic area is becoming increasingly concentrated, with a few large retail/wholesale enterprises in each country dominating their markets. Consumer cooperatives, retail cooperatives, and voluntary chains are the main forms of organization. By contacting a few buyers in each country, a U.S. food exporter can cover a large part of the market.

Although the combined population of Sweden, Norway, and Finland is only 17 million people, their food imports from the United States averaged \$192 million annually during 1981-83.

Latin American Imports of U.S. Feed Grains

Hardly Affected by Price Changes

Price changes for U.S. feed grains have not greatly affected their importation by Mexico and Venezuela, the two most important Latin American markets. Those findings are based on a study by ERS agricultural economists Chong Kim and Christine Bolling (786-1665).

In the 1970's and early 1980's, consumption of animal products and feed grains in Mexico

Sacks of groundnuts
(one of Sudan's export
commodities) being
loaded aboard a ship at
Port Sudan on the Red
Sea.



Photo by J. Novotny

and Venezuela climbed significantly. Those increases were in response to government subsidies and rapid economic and population growth. To meet the increased demand, imports of U.S. coarse grains by the two countries climbed; but at the same time, trade became increasingly variable. Because imports did not respond much to price changes in recent years, Kim and Bolling have attempted to identify other factors influencing import demand.

Their results show that Mexico's changes in imports of U.S. corn are mainly determined by the weather and Mexican policy variables. Subsidies (for both production and consumption) and foreign exchange holdings are important in determining changes in the quantities of U.S. corn imported by Mexico. In Venezuela, the same factors (government subsidies and foreign exchange) are the main determinants of changes in U.S. sorghum imports.

African and Middle Eastern Imports Surge

But U.S. Share Declines

African and Middle Eastern imports of oilseeds and oilseed products, meat and meat products, dairy products, and grains have grown tremendously, but the U.S. market share has declined. ERS researchers Shahla Shapouri and Stacey Rosen (786-1680) recently examined the sources and trends of agricultural imports by Africa and the Middle East. Import growth has surged in commodities such as meat and meat products, for which the United States has never held a significant market share, and oilseeds and oilseed products, for which the U.S. share has been declining.

Export earnings and credit were most important in determining the overall value of imports. Because most of the countries have limited financial reserves, imports must be restrained when export earnings, credit, or both decline. Similarly, when they increase, the restraints are eased. Shapouri and Rosen assumed that the quantity of commercial food imports is a function of domestic production, the total value of imports, world food prices, and food aid.

Pesticides and Corn and Soybean Yields

Multiyear Effort Culminates in Six Reports

Banning individual pesticides—except for herbicides such as atrazine or bentazon—would only minimally affect corn and soybean yields. But simultaneously banning several alternative pesticides that deal with the same pest problem could depress yields.

ERS has released six reports on the use and impacts of corn and soybean pesticides in six regions. The reports are the culmination of several years of cooperation among ERS, the Agricultural Research Service, and the Cooperative Extension Service.

The reports will permit more thorough analyses of the economic implications of pesticide regulations considered by the Environmental Protection Agency. (Craig Osteen, 786-1462.)

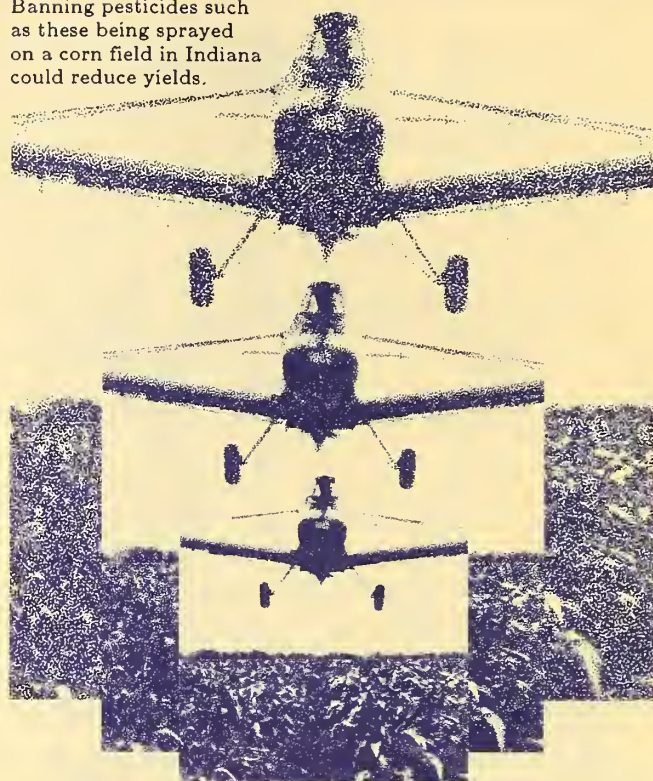
What Affects the Demand for Food?

Traditional Factors and Interdependencies

Income and population were found to have the largest effects on food demand of the factors studied by ERS researchers James Blaylock and David Smallwood (786-1862). They estimated how changes in income, age and population distribution, and racial mix of the population affect 28 food groups. Their study, *U.S. Demand for Food: Household Expenditures, Demographics, and Projections*, is based on an analysis of the 1980-81 Bureau of Labor Statistics' Continuing Consumer Expenditure Survey (CCES). A previous ERS report, *Food Spending in American Households, 1980-81*, also by Blaylock and Smallwood, describes the CCES data and provides cross tabulations of average expenditures per person for 133 food items by selected household characteristics.

In a related ERS study, *U.S. Demand for Food: A Complete System of Price and Income Effects*, ERS researcher Kuo Huang (786-1862) details a new econometric procedure developed for estimating food demand systems. He applied the procedure to obtain estimates of all direct, cross-price, and expenditure elasticities and associated standard er-

Banning pesticides such as these being sprayed on a corn field in Indiana could reduce yields.



USDA Photo

rors for a complete demand system comprised of 40 food items and 1 nonfood item. Huang's demand system illustrates the interdependent nature of demand for food at the disaggregated level and provides practical information for use in commodity forecasting and analysis of programs and policy.

Agriculture and the Macroeconomy

The UC-ERS Model

Cooperative research between the University of California (UC) at Berkeley and ERS has focused on introducing the key variables of the macroeconomic and international sectors (especially monetary and fiscal policy) into a policy model of the agricultural sector. With a complete set of those linkages, both forward (to agriculture) and backward (from agriculture), the model is more realistic for policy analysis than models looking at only one or a few important nonagricultural variables.

Monetary policies of the early 1980's taxed agriculture, the model shows, while policies in

the 1970's subsidized agriculture. The model includes detailed wheat, feed grain, and livestock sectors plus macroeconomic and international sectors. Currently, ERS has the agricultural sector of the model on a microcomputer. The model has been used to contrast the conditions of the early 1980's with those of the early 1970's in order to discern the effects of macroeconomic policy on agriculture. (Barry Krissoff, 786-1632.)

Farmland Ownership and Land Earnings

Sector Leakages Are Significant

Can we design policies that aid groups of farmers without transferring windfall benefits to unintended recipients? ERS economist Robert Boxley (786-1419) asked that as he examined the relationship between farmland ownership and the distribution of land earnings.

Because land constitutes the major financial asset of the farm sector, widespread agricultural land ownership by nonfarmer landlords transfers agricultural earnings, wealth, ownership, and management control away from farmers and the farm sector to those outside the traditional farm sector.

In 1978, there were 3.9 million farmland owners but fewer than 2.5 million farmers. Of the 1.9 million landlords in 1979, about one-third leased land to operators of farms with sales of \$100,000 or more and three-fourths leased land to operators with sales over \$20,000. Although the number of farms in the United States has declined substantially (from 6.8 million in 1935 to 2.3 million in 1985), the number of farmland owners and the proportion of rented farmland over that period have remained relatively constant.

Farmland Values

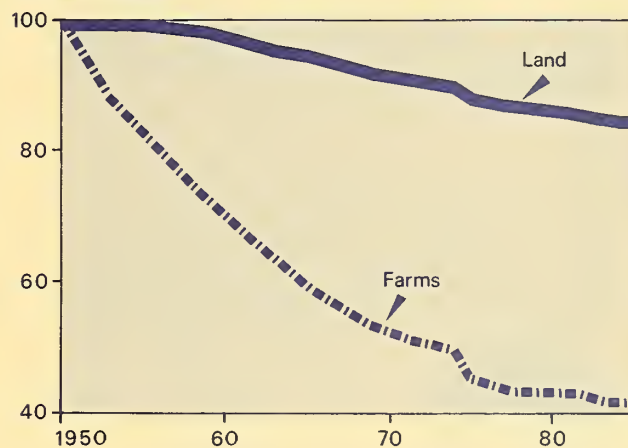
Historical Data Series Now Available

ERS statistical assistant John Jones and economist Charles Barnard (786-1425) recently compiled State-level data on the number of farms, acreage, value of land and buildings, farm real estate debt, and real estate taxes per

\$100 of value. Between 1950 and 1985, the number of farms declined 60 percent while acreage fell only 15 percent [chart]; the average value per acre increased 12 fold between 1950 and 1982—before dipping 18 percent over the following 3 years [chart]; farm buildings constituted 30 percent of total farm real estate value in 1950 but only 13 percent in 1985; the farm real estate debt-to-asset ratio doubled (from 7 percent to 14 percent) between 1950 and 1985; and farm real estate taxes remained fairly constant at around \$1 per \$100 of value between 1950 and 1973 before dropping to about 50 cents per \$100 in the 1980's.

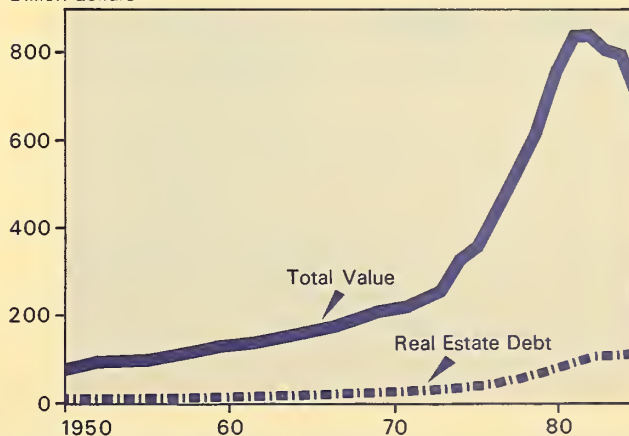
Number of Farms and Land in Farms

1950=100 index



U.S. Farm Real Estate Value and Debt

Billion dollars



Personnel Notes

Ahrens Appointed DSC Director

Michael Ahrens is the new Director, Data Services Center (DSC). He had served as interim Director since October 1984 (see *ERS*, Vol. 2, No. 6). From 1980 to 1984, Ahrens was Chief, Information Resources Branch, DSC. Prior to joining ERS in 1980, he spent 14 years working in all aspects of data processing in USDA's Farmers Home Administration. Ahrens is a graduate of St. Louis University.

Ahrens replaces Alice Tennies who resigned in October 1985, following a year's leave of absence.



Reichelderfer Is NRED Associate Director

Katherine Reichelderfer is the new Associate Director, Natural Resource Economics Division (NRED). She has M.S. and Ph.D. degrees in agricultural and resource economics from the University of Maryland. Reichelderfer began her career in ERS with NRED in 1977 and has been Leader, Pest Management Technology Section, and Deputy Branch Chief, Inputs and Productivity Branch. In 1984, she was appointed Chief, Latin America Branch, International Economics Division (see *ERS*, Vol. 2, No. 4).

Reichelderfer has authored numerous publications and has served as a member of the American Agricultural Economics Association (AAEA) Nominating Committee, reviewer of AAEA selected papers, member of the Panel



of Experts on Integrated Pest Control of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and United Nations Environmental Programme, chairperson of an FAO Task Force on Integrated Pest Control Economics, and member of the Steering Committee for the AAEA Committee on Women's Opportunities in Agricultural Economics.

Reichelderfer has received the ERS Administrator's Special Merit Award (three times) and USDA Certificate of Merit.

Davis Appointed IED Assistant Director

Velmar Davis is the new Assistant Director, International Economics Division (IED). He will be coordinating ERS research on the competitiveness of U.S. agricultural products in world markets (see *ERS*, Vol. 3, No. 4). Davis has B.S. and M.S. degrees in agricultural education from Purdue and a Ph.D. in agricultural economics



from the University of Illinois, where he joined ERS's field staff in 1955. There his research focused on the economic effects on crop and livestock production systems of adopting mechanization technology. In 1964, he transferred to Washington, DC, to become Leader, Labor and Mechanization Group, and later Chief, Production Resources Branch, Farm Production Economics Division (FPED). Other ERS assignments include Field Research Coordinator for FPED, Assistant to the Administrator (for coordination of the agency's environmental research), and Deputy Director, Associate Director, and Acting Director of the Natural Resource Economics Division.

Davis received the USDA Superior Service Award in 1970. He was Leader of the Boll Weevil/Cotton Insect Management Evaluation Team that received the USDA Superior Service Award in 1980 and Administrator's Special Merit Award in 1981.

Rector is New Branch Chief

Gerald Rector is the new Chief, International Aggregate Analysis Branch, International Economics Division (IED). He joined ERS in December 1972 as a commodity analyst in the Economic and Statistical Analysis Division where he specialized in U.S. poultry and egg situation and outlook work. Rector has been the senior livestock analyst and Leader, Commodity Analysis Section, World Analysis Branch, IED (see *ERS*, Vol. 2, No. 3). He has a B.S. in agricultural science from Tennessee Technological University and an M.S. in agricultural economics from the University of Tennessee.

Trostle is New Branch Chief

Ronald Trostle is the new Chief, Western Hemisphere Branch, International Economics Division. Trostle was a self-employed farmer while in high school. After receiving a B.S. degree in agriculture, he served as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Brazil. He has M.S. and Ph.D. degrees in agricultural economics from Kansas State University. Trostle has also worked for the U.S. Agency for International Development in Indonesia and the Dominican Republic on projects in agricultural education, irrigation, farm-to-market roads, plant breeding, multiple cropping research, resettlement, integrated rural development, and agricultural sector planning.

Trostle has been with ERS since 1980 and has served as the Canadian country analyst and Leader, Situation and Outlook Section, Western Europe Branch. He received the Administrator's Special Merit Award in 1984 for staff work on the European Community.



Conway Is New Section Leader

Roger Conway is the new Leader, Technology, Productivity, and Market Structure Section, Inputs and Productivity Branch, Natural Resource Economics Division. He has a B.A. in economics from George Washington University, an M.A. in economics from George Mason University, and a Ph.D. in economics from George Washington University.

Affiliated with ERS since 1978, Conway spent a year as an econometrician with the Bureau of Economic Analysis, U.S. Department of Commerce, before returning to ERS.

Conway has participated in numerous professional conferences and authored many publications on a wide variety of subjects including commodity modeling, production economics, macroeconomics, international trade, and econometric theory. His current research interests include applying stochastic coefficients models to incorporate technological change, modeling investment in agriculture, and using Bayesian statistical methods to model farmers' expectations.



Durst Named Section Leader

Ron Durst is the new Leader, Tax Analysis Section, Finance and Tax Branch, Agriculture and Rural Economics Division. He has been with ERS nearly 6 years, focusing on staff analysis and research on agricultural tax issues. Durst most recently served as the Leader, Tax Policy Research and Analysis Project. He has an M.S. in agricultural economics and a J.D. from West Virginia University.



Illinois' Setia in ERS

Parveen Setia, agricultural economist from the University of Illinois, is in ERS to work on a project, "Economic Soil Loss Tolerance Values." The study will estimate potential public savings of adopting economic criteria for establishing socially acceptable soil loss tolerance levels. Studies on soil erosion have indicated that annual productivity losses due to erosion are not as significant as conservationists commonly assume. That conclusion suggests that traditional soil loss tolerance values are inadequate in determining soil conservation policy and in selecting specific conservation actions by producers, implying that economic factors should be incorporated.

Setia's economic analysis will take into consideration the risk and uncertainty in agriculture and how an individual's perception of risk influences decisions regarding adoption of conservation practices and the evaluation of public program uncertainties.

Setia has a B.S. in agriculture and an M.S. in agricultural finance from the Punjab Agricultural University, an M.S. in production economics from the University of Guelph (Canada), and a Ph.D. in agricultural economics from the University of Illinois.



California's Sokolow in ERS

Alvin Sokolow, professor of political science at the University of California at Davis, is on sabbatical with ERS during 1985/86. His research on rural, local decisionmaking and administration is based on an extensive field study of 12 small municipal and county governments in California and Illinois. The



study, conducted since 1981 under a cooperative agreement between ERS and the University of California (with Sokolow as principal investigator), has sought to demonstrate that optimal use of existing resources—funds, personnel, expertise, and information—is just as critical a problem for small rural governments as resource availability or "capacity." Sokolow is now completing the final project reports, including case studies and an organizational analysis for each sample jurisdiction.

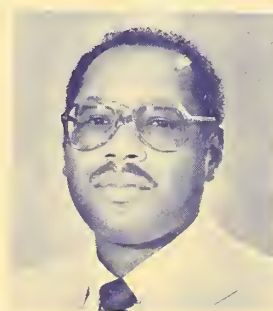
Sokolow is also affiliated (during his year in Washington) with the National Association of Towns and Townships (NATaT), the major organization of small towns and rural governments. He is the first visiting fellow with NATaT's new National Center for Small Communities. In that capacity, he is studying Federal policy and program effects on small local governments and assisting the Center in developing an information and training program for local officials.

Sokolow has a Ph.D. in political science from the University of Illinois at Urbana. He has been on the University of California political science faculty since 1965.

North Carolina's Thompson in ERS

Alton Thompson, assistant professor of rural sociology at North Carolina A&T

University, recently spent 3 months in ERS working on rural poverty issues pertaining to the nonmetropolitan South. While in ERS, Thompson developed a research proposal and associated data base from the Bureau of the Census' Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) to analyze income sources and distribution and poverty for rural groups living in the South, such as minorities, female-headed households, and farm residents.



Allen Named Leadership Development Fellow

ERS economist Joyce Allen has been named a Leadership Development Fellow of the Na-



tional Center for Food and Agricultural Policy at Resources for the Future. The Center awarded 19 internships to potential leaders in the fields of food, agricultural, natural resource, and environmental policy. The in-

tern program is intended to enhance the leadership ability of younger professionals by broadening their knowledge of and experience with national public policy issues and the policy process and by strengthening their communication skills.

The awardees will spend 5 weeks in Washington, DC, participating in a series of seminars, workshops, briefings, and discussions with senior policy leaders and analysts in the public and private sectors. Interns will attend public hearings, track legislation in Congress, and meet with members of Congress, key administrators of Federal agencies, and heads of interest groups that participate in the policy process at the national level.

The emphasis will be on national public policy issues involving agriculture and its relationships with international trade and foreign affairs, food and nutrition, natural resources and the environment, and domestic economic affairs. About half of the 5-week

session will be devoted to individual or small group study of specific policy topics.

Barry on the Hill

ERS economist Robert Barry is serving on the staff of U.S. Representative Connie Mack



from Florida under a "LEGIS" Fellowship through May 1986. "LEGIS" is an Office of Personnel Management program designed to provide Federal executives a working knowledge of Congressional operations. Barry

is focusing on budgetary issues for Representative Mack, a member of the House Budget Committee.

ERS-AID Cooperation

Piper on Detail to AID

ERS economist Dan Piper recently began a 2-year assignment with the Office of Agriculture, U.S. Agency for International Development (AID) in Rosslyn, VA. He will initially help set up a system to manage and analyze AID's project portfolio, evaluate project results, and monitor followup actions. Later, Piper will conduct cost-benefit analyses of various AID projects, evaluate project proposals, and assist in formulating new policies for the Office of Agriculture's Economic Policy and Planning Division.

Webbs Quit DC for California

ERS economists Alan and Shwu-eng Webb have been assigned to 3-year field positions at the University of California at Davis.

Shwu-eng will analyze the interdependence between commodity and natural resource policies, develop a methodology for assessing long-term water management and environmental issues, and analyze alternative policies and their impacts on the quality and availability of water in irrigated agriculture.

Alan will analyze the determinants of U.S. competitiveness in agricultural trade.

The Webbs will work with Alex McCalla, Richard Howitt, and other faculty members at Davis who are doing research for ERS under cooperative research agreements.

Highlights of Staff Activities

Jerome Stam was interviewed by Robert Samuelson of *Newsweek* about farm financial stress . . . **Carlos Arnade, Elaine Grigsby, Suchada Langley, Donald Lerman, and Michael Weiss** presented papers at the Allied Social Science Associations (ASSA) meeting in New York City . . . **James Malley and Ralph Monaco** conducted a seminar in Washington, DC, on the effects on U.S. agriculture of reduced Federal outlays under the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings budget reduction law . . . **Jack Runyan** is participating on a national committee that is advising EPA on farmworker protection standards for agricultural pesticides . . . **Thomas Stinson** is assisting U.S. Senator David Durenburger from Minnesota in preparing a committee print on the effects on rural local governments of the farm financial crisis . . . **Carl Mabbs-Zeno** briefed Assistant Secretary Robert Thompson on Nigeria's new import and foreign debt policies . . . **Richard Brown and Nydia Suarez** provided background information on agricultural production and trade of the Caribbean countries for a workshop in Washington, DC, sponsored by the Agribusiness Promotion Council . . . **Maurice Landes** went to India to investigate its grain and vegetable oil situation and to develop some cooperative research projects on fertilizer and marketing with India's Ministry of Agriculture . . . **William Coyle** participated in a roundtable discussion on U.S.-Japanese agricultural trade sponsored by the Council on Religion and International Affairs, in New York City . . . Eighteen ERS staff members wrote chapters for the 1985 Yearbook of Agriculture, *U.S. Agriculture in a Global Economy* . . . **Janet Livezey** spoke on rice to the Texas Farm Bureau . . . **John Lawler** participated in the National Wool Growers Convention in San Diego . . . **Tanya Roberts and Rosanna Morrison** represented ERS on a USDA task force dealing with trichina . . . **Terry Townsend** addressed the 1986 Dairy Policy Conference in St. Paul, Minnesota, on the commodity sections of the Farm Bill . . . **Ralph Heimlich and Marlow Vesterby** went to the Earth Resources Observation System Data Center in Sioux Falls, SD, to learn how to analyze spatial data for resource assessments . . . **Heimlich** also provided background information to BBC for a television program on the geology and agriculture of the Great Plains . . . **Linda Lee** chaired a session on soil conservation and organized a symposium on resources in the southeastern coastal plain at the Southern Agricultural Economics Association (SAEA) meeting in Orlando . . . **Joyce Allen, Alexander Barbarika, Susan Bentley, William Boggess, Daniel Colacicco, Bernal Green, Suchada Langley, Frederick Nelson, Peggy Ross, Glenn Schaible, Shwu-eng Webb, and James Zellner** presented papers at the SAEA meeting in Orlando . . . **Joseph Barse** participated in an interagency meeting on assessing acid rain, in Washington, DC . . . **Barse** also participated in a USDA working group meeting on environmental issues in Washington, DC . . . **Linda Langner** participated in a symposium on the economic and social values of wildlife resources, in Syracuse, NY . . . **Daniel Colacicco** presented a paper on soil conservation at a workshop on soil and water management, in Amman, Jordan . . . ERS hosted a meeting of input industry representatives and officials from Federal agencies involved in input data collection and analysis . . . and 74 ERS staff members, 4 Statistical Reporting Service staff members, and 8 Economics Management Staff members received the ERS Administrator's Special Merit Award.

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